

SmallTalk Learning

Helping Babies Communicate Before they Can Talk

Quick Ideas for Getting Started

Sing and Play

Build your own vocabulary and baby's awareness of signing through songs and games.

Make up your own songs, modify familiar songs, or use songs/music developed for signing.

Use Peek-a-boo, Patty Cake, or "The Wheels on the Bus" as your guide.

You can sing and play at any age!

Label

As your own sign vocabulary grows, casually provide sign labels throughout the day.

Provide sign labels in "real" contexts and when you explore picture books such as "Story Time With Signs & Rhymes" with your baby.

Use your natural tendency to provide verbal labels as your guide.

Sign labels will come more naturally to you as your vocabulary grows. Learn new signs as you need to: Paper and Web Dictionaries, Books, Videos, Additional Workshops.

You can label with signs at any age!

Focus

Choose 1-3 signs to "work on."

Choose words your baby would say if he or she were able to clearly verbalize wants and needs. Your baby's first signs will be words he or she is motivated to say.

Consider how we "teach" babies to wave "bye-bye" or do "high five's" as your guide: i.e. appropriate context, relaxed repetition, showing baby with their own hands, noticing baby's imprecise attempts, having confidence baby will learn.

Add new focus signs when baby can sign his or her version of first words.

Start as early as 6 months of age. Be on the "look out" for baby's *approximations* of signs as early as 7-8 months of age (or when baby starts to wave, point, reach, nod, etc).

Eventually, Singing, Playing, Labeling and Focusing simply become "Signing With Your Baby."